A very

excellent and [illegible]
exposition vpon the
twentye Psalm[illegible]
Dauid, called
in latyn
Dominus regit me, & nihil.

Translated out of
hye Almayne
in to En-
glyshe
by
Myles Couerd[illegible]

1.5.3.7.

Thō: Tanner

BODLEIANA · BIBLIOTHECA

Upon the.xxii.Psalme.

IN this Psalme doth Dauid and euery christē hart geue thankes & prayse vn to God for his most prin= cipal benefit, namely, for the preachyng of his dear & holy word, wherby we are called, accepted, & nō= bred amonge the multitude, which is ỳ cō= gregacyon or church of God: where onely (and in no place els) the pure doctrine, the true knowlege of Gods wyll, & the ryght seruice of God is founde and had. The effect of this Psalme

But this same noble treasure doth ho ly Dauid prayse and extol maruaylous ex= cellently with goodly swete, fayre and pure wordes, yee and that with lykenesses bo= rowed out of the Gods seruice of the olde testament.

Fyrst, he lykeneth hymselfe to a shepe, whom God hymselfe (as fayethfull diligent shepherde) doth wonderous well take hede vnto, fedeth hym in a pleasaunt grene pa= sture, whiche stondeth full of good thicke grasse, where ther is aboundaunce also of fresshe water, and no scarcenesse. Item he lykeneth God also vnto suche a shepherde as with his staffe leadeth and bryngtth the shepe the playne ryght way, that it can not go amysse, and defendeth his flocke so with the shepehoke, that the wolfe can not breake in. After this doth he make hymselfe a geste for whom God prepareth a table, where he fyndeth both strength and comfore, refresh

a shepe

The shep= herde

A geste

ynge and ioye, and that plenteously.

The word of God hath many names.

And thus the Prophete geueth the word of god diuerse names, calleth it goodly pleasaunt grene grasse, freshe water, the ryght waye, a staffe, a shephoke, a table, balme or pleasaunt oyle, and a cuppe that is alwaye full. And this he doth not without a cause: for the power of Gods worde is manyfolde: For why? Lyke as a shepe in a fayre pleasaunt medowe, beside the grene grasse and freshe water in the presence of his shepherde (whiche leadeth it with the staffe or rodde, so that it can not go astraye: and defendeth it so with the shepehoke that no harme can happē vnto it) hath his foode and pleasure in al safegarde. Or lyke as a man lacketh nothynge that sytteth at a table, where ther is plenty of meate & drynke and all maner of comforte and gladnesse. So muche more, they that be the shepe of this shepherd (wherof this psalme syngeth) lacke no good thynge, are rychely prouyded for, not onely in soule but also in body. As Christ sayeth in ỹ sixte of Mathew: Seke fyrst the kyngdome of God and the ryghteousnesse therof, so shal all these thynges be mynistred vnto you. For as they ỹ wante bodely foode lyue in great straynghtnesse & penurynesse, not beynge able to fulfyl the bodyes request i this behalfe: euē so also those that wante this wholsome and necessarye worde of god, cā not reioyce nor be pacyfied inwardly. Yee euen as bread and wyne refresh a mans fleshly harte, and make hym

ioyfull: euen so the worde of God quyckeneth and refresheth a mans soule inwardly.

For whan the worde of God is truly and sincerely preached, loke how many dyuerse names the prophete geueth it here, so many commodities and frutes doth it bryng. Unto them that are diligent and earnest to heare it (whom oure LORDE God knoweth onely for his owne shepe) it is a pleasaunt grene grasse, a fresshe water, wherewith they are satisfied and refreshed. It kepeth them also in the ryghte waye, and preserueth them, that no misfortune nor harme happen vnto them. Moreouer, it is vnto them a continuall wealth, where ther is abūdaūce of meate & drynke, and all maner of ioye and pleasure. That is, They are not onely instructe and gyded, refreshed, strengthed and comforted by ỹ worde of God, but euer more and more preserued in the ryght waye, defended in al maner of trouble both of body and soule. And fynally they haue the victory and prouayle agaynste all temptacyons and troubles, wherof they muste abyde ryghte many, as the fourth verse doth specifye. Shortly, they lyue in all maner of safegarde, as they vnto whom no myssfortune can happen, for as muche as theyr shepherde doth fede thē and preserue them.

The preachynge of godsword bryngeth prosperite.

Therfore shulde we take instrucciō out of this Psalme, not to dispyse ỹ worde of

doctryne to be taken of this psalm

God, but gladlye to heare, and learne the same, to loue it, and to make muche of it, and to resorte vnto the lytle flock, where we maye haue it. And agayne on the other syde, to flye and eschue those that do blaspheme and persecute it. For wher this blessed lyghte doth not shyne, there is nother prosperite nor health, nother strength, nor comforte, eyther in body or soule, but vtter disquietnesse, terroure and dispayre, specially whan trouble, distresse and paynfull death is at hande. How be it the vngodly (as the prophet sayeth) haue neuer rest, whether they be in welth or wo. For yf they be in prosperite, than are they presumptuous, proude, and hyghe mynded, forget oure LORDE god vtterly, boaste and crake onely of theyr owne power, ryches wysdome. &c. And take thought [illegible] de, how they maye maynteyne and increase the same, and how they may persecute and oppresse other men that lye in theyr waies. But yf the leafe turne aboute with them, as doutlesse it must nedes do at the last:

Esa. 57.

Depositit potētes de sede, & diui tes [illegible] inan

(For that swete virgin Mary is a very sure prophetisse, which yet hath not fayled in hyr longe) then are they of all the moost miserable and carefullest people, which immediatly fall to despayre and mistrust. What ayleth them? They knowe not where nor how they shall seke comforte, seynge they haue not ỹ worde of God, which onely teacheth ỹ ryghtwaye how to be pacient & to haue a good hope, euen in aduersite. Ro. 15.

Thys thynge ought to warn vs & moue vs, that we esteme nothynge more excellent noz worthye vpon earth, than this benefyte, namely to haue that deare blessed word and that we can be in a place, where it may be freelye preached, and professed openlye. A Christen man therfor that belongeth vnto a church, wherein the worde of God is taught, as oft as he goeth in, shuld thynke vpon thys Psalme, & out of a ioyfull hart with the prophete to geue God thankes for his vnoutspeakable grace, that he hath set hym (as hys owne shepe) in a pleasaunt grene medowe, where ther is plentye of good grasse and fresh water. That is, that he maye be in a place where he maye heare and learne the worde of God, and conceaue ryche comforte therout, both in bodye, and soule.

Thys blessed Dauid dyd well vnderstonde, how worthy a treasure it is, whan it maye so be had, therfor can he boast and synge so well of it, and magnifye this benefyte aboue all that is in onye estymacyon oz worshyppe vpon earth. At hym oughte we to learne this science, and (accordynge to hys ensample) not onely to be thankfull vnto God oure louynge and faythful shepherde, and to magnifye hys vnoutspeakable gyft, whiche he of very louynge kyndnesse hath geuen vs (as Dauid doth here in the fyrste fyue verses) but also carnestly to desyre and pray hym (as he doth in the last verse,) that we maye abyde by thys riches, pie for vs.

What we ought to learne here of Dauid.

and neuer to fal away from his holy Chri-sten church.

And such a prayer is exceadynge necessarye: For we are very weake, and (as the Apostle saynt Paul sayeth) we carye this treasure aboute in earthen vessels. The deuel also our aduersary beareth deadly hate vnto vs for this treasures sake. Therfore doth he not rest, but goeth aboute as a roarynge Lyon, and seketh how he maye deuoure vs Besyde all this he hath a quarel vnto vs, because of our olde sacke whiche we carye yet vpon oure neckes, wherin ther be yet also dyuerse concupiscences and synnes. More ouer, the deare flocke of Christe is spotted and fyled with so many horrible offences (or sklaūders) that because of the same ther do many fall awaye from them. Therfore (I saye) it is necessary that we praye, and put this vncorrupte doctryne stil in practise, and defende oure selues therwith agaynst all sklaūders, that we maye continue vnto the ende and be saued.

2. Cor. 4.

The blindnesse of ỹ worlde.

Thys madde and blynde worlde knoweth vtterly nothynge of this treasure a precious stone, but ymagyneth onely (euen as a swyne or vnreasonable beast) how they maye here fyll the belye: Or els (whan it commeth to the poynt) they folowe lyes and ypocrisye: As for the trueth and fayth, they let it passe. Therfore do they synge no Psalme vnto God for his holy worde, but rather (whan he offreth it vnto them)

they blaspheme it and condemne it for here sye. And as for those that teache it or wyll be knowen of it, the worlde persecuteth the & putteth the to death, lyke as yf they were deceauers and the most vngracyous wretches that are in the worlde. It shalbe good therfore for this small flocke to knowlege suche a benefyte, and with the prophete to synge a Psalme or songe of thankesgeuyng vnto God for it.

But what saye ye of the that can not haue the preachynge of Gods worde? As namely, they that dwell here & there amõge tyrauntes and enemyes of the trueth? No doute, where as the worde of God is preached, there can it not passe awaye without frute, as Esay sayeth in the.lv. Chap. The good christen people also of the same place haue one vauntage, which in dede is deare vnto them. For they that be Christen men, coũte it a very great thynge, that they may be in a place where the worde of God is frely and openly taught and knowleged, & the sacramentes mynistred after Christes institucyon. But as for these, they be sowe very thynne. The false christen are alwaye mo then the good. The great multitude careth nothynge for Gods worde, nother do they knowlege it for a benefyte, that they may hear it without al harme & parel. Yee they are soone fylled and weery of it, and esteme it but a payne to heare it and to receaue the holy sacrament.

Of them yͤ wolde and can not haue the worde of God.

Agayne, they yͤ suffre vnder tyrauntes,

complayne daye and nyght and long greatly for it. And yf a smal morsel of oure bread that Christ hath geuen vs so rychelye doth come vnto them, they receaue it with great ioye and thankfulnesse, and do them selues muche good withall, where as oure swyne in the meane season hauynge ẏ worthy bread them selues so rychely, and many whole baskettes full therof, can not reache vnto it, they are so weery of it. Yee they cast it downe, walowe them selues therin, treade it vnder theyr fete and renne ouer it

Menware weery of ẏ worde of God.

Therfore goeth it euē after ẏ prouerbe. Whā a thynge begineth to be comun, it is nomore set by, but despysed be it neuer so precious. And suche Prouerbes are specially founde true in the worde of God. Where men haue it, there wyll they not awaye wythall. Agayne, where men haue it not, there wolde they be glad to haue it. Where men haue a church at theyr dores wherin the worde of God is taught, there go they vp and downe in the market in the preachynge tyme, and lurcke about the graues. Where they be ten or twentye myle from it, there wold they be glad to go with the multitude, and to passe ouer with them vnto the house of God with ioyfulnesse, and thankesgeuynge, as it is in the.xli. Psalme.

Of them ẏ dwel vnder tyrauntes.

Therfore shortelye thys is myne answere vnto the questyon, concernyng them that dwel vnder tyrauntes. Blessed be they which are now scattered abrode vnder the

Turke or Pope beynge destitute of Gods worde, and wolde yet be glad with al theyr hartes to haue it, and in the meane season receaue with thankesgeuynge suche morsels as they can get, tyll the meale be better. Nowe yf they be not farre from the place where the worde of God is preached, and the blessed sacrament mynystred accordyng vnto Christes institution, they maye well go thyther and enioye the same treasure, lyke as many do, and are therfore punyshed of theyr wycked rulers, both in body, and goodes. But yf they dwell farre from such places, yet do they not ceasse at the least to sighe therafter. No doute Christ oure LORDE wyll heare theyr sighynge, and in processe of tyme wyl he turne back theyr captyuyte. Agayne, vnhappye, yee and vnhappye agayne are they, that haue thys treasure plenteously at theyr dores, and yet care not for it. On them shall the word of Christ be fulfylled where he sayeth. Many shall come from the easte, and west, and shall syt wyth Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kyngdome of heauen, but the chyldrē of the kyngdome shalbe cast out. Mathei.8.

&c. Let thys be sayde for an introductyon. Nowe wyll we shortlye go ouer the Psalme.

An exposicion.

¶ The LORDE is my shepherd I shall lacke nothynge.

A swete name

First of all the prophet and euery faythfull hart, calleth God his shepherde. Nowe though ỳ scripture geueth God many louynge names, Yet this whiche the Prophete geueth here vnto God, is a much more swete & gracyous name, where he calleth hym a shepherde, and sayeth:

The LORDE is my shepherde.

It is very comfortable whan the scripture calleth God our hope, oure strength, oure stonye rocke, our castell, our shelde, our cõforte, our delyuerer, our kynge. &c. For verely he declareth the thynge so styll in dede vnto his owne, that he is euen so as ỳ scripture discrybeth hym. But exceadynge comfortable is it that he is called here (& many tymes els in the scripture) A shepherde. For in this onely worde Shepherde is almost all comprehẽded together, what good and comfortable thynge so euer is spoken of God.

The cause ỳ moued ỳ prophet to cal God his shepherde.

Therfore doth the prophet speake this worde wt a ioyful & sorowlesse hart, which is full of faith, and for very great gladnesse and comforte, exceadeth. And sayeth not: The LORDE is my strength castell. &c. Whiche were a maruaylous comfortable sayenge: But the LORDE is

my shepherde. As yf he wolde say: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde and I his shepe, then am I wonderous well prouyded for, both in body and soule, he shall get me a competent lyuynge, he shall defende me & kepe me fro mysfortune, he shall care for me, he shall helpe me out of all trouble, he shall confort me, he shall strength me. &c. Summa, he shall do for me what so euer a good shepherde ought to do. All these benefites and mo doth he comprehende in this onely worde Shepherde, as he expoundeth it hymselfe immediatly where he sayeth:

I shall lacke nothynge.

Besydes this some of ẏ other names which the scripture ascribe vnto God, soũde partly to glorious and to hye, & brynge in a maner a feare with them, whan men heare thẽ to be named. As whan the scripture calleth God our LORDE, Kynge, Maker. &c. Of such a nature is not this worde Shepherde, but soundeth very frendly, and vnto them that be godly, it bryngeth in a maner a confidence, cõforte and trust with it whã they reade or hear it, lyke as this worde Father and other mo whan they be appropriated vnto God.

Therfore is this one of the most louyng and comfortable similitudes (and yet very comẽ) in the scripture, that it lykeneth the maiesty of God, to a vertuous, faythful, or (as Christ sayeth) a good shepherde: and vs poore, weak & wretched synners, to a shepe

A very cõfortable similitude.

Now can not this confortable and louyng similitude be better vnderstande, thē to go in to the creatures themselues (wherout ỹ prophetes toke this and such other lyke similitudes) and to learne diligētly thereby, what the condicion and property of a naturall shepe is, and the office, labour and diligence of a good shepherd. Who so taketh good hede therunto, maye not onely with ease vnderstāde this and other similitudes in the scripture concernynge the shepherde & the shepe: but also they shalbe [illegible] hym exceadynge swete and comfortable.

The condicyon of a shepe

A shepe must lyue only by the helpe, defence and diligence of his shepherde. As soone as it leseth hym, it is cōpassed about with all maner of parell, and [illegible] nedes perisshe, for it can not helpe it [illegible] why, it is a poore, weake and [illegible] beast, that can nother fede nor gyde it selfe, nor fynde the ryght waye, nor kepe it selfe agaynst ony vnhappenesse or mysfortune. Sauynge this, that of nature it is fearfull, flyeth & goeth astraye. And yf it go but a lytle out of the waye, and come from his shepherde, it is not possible for it selfe to fynde hym agayne, but rēneth euer farther and farther frō hym And though it come to other shepherdes and shepe, yet is it nothynge helped therwith. For it knoweth not the voyce of straunge shepherdes, therfore flyeth it frō them, and runneth so longe astraye, tyll the wolfe rauysh it, or tyll it perysh some other wayes.

Neuertheles as weak a beast as it is, yet hath it this condicyon, that with all diligence it bydeth with his owne shepherde, and seketh cõfoyte at his helpe and defence: And how or whether so euer he leadeth it, it foloweth. And yf it can but be with hym it careth for nomoye, nother feareth it ony mã, but is careleſſe and mery, for it lacketh nothynge. It hath also this good vertue in it, whiche is well to be marked (for Christ doth specially prayse the same in his shepe) this I saye, it hath, that it wyll be earnest and sure to heare and knowe the voyce of his shepherde, and ordreth it selfe therafter, and wyl for nothynge go from it, but folowe straycht the same. Agayne, it regardeth not the strange shepherdes voyce. And though they call and whistle vppon it neuer so frendly, yet careth not it therfore: much lesse doth it folowe them. The propertie of a shepe.

Agayne, this is ỹ office of a good shepherde, that he doth not only prouyde for his shepe pasture, and other mo thynges that belonge therto, but defendeth them also ỹ no harme chaunce vnto them. Beſydes this he taketh diligent hede that he lese none. Yf ony go astraye, he rũneth after it, seketh it, and fetcheth it agayne. As for such as be yonge, feble and sicke, he dealeth gently wt them, kepeth them, holdeth them vp, and caryeth them, tyll they be olde, stronge and whole. &c The office of a shepherde.

Euen thus goeth it also in ỹ spirituall shepfolde, that is to saye, in the flocke of How it goeth in ỹ

shepfolde of Christ.

Christ. Loke how lytle a naturall shepe can kepe, gyde, rule, saue or defende it selfe agaynst daunger and mysfortune (for it is a feble and wapenlesse beast.) So lytle can we poore, weak and miserable people kepe and rule our selues spiritually, walke and endure in the ryght waye, or of our owne strengthe to defende vs agaynst all euel, and to get vs helpe and comforte in trouble and distresse.

The misery of oure nature.

For how shulde he haue skyll to gyde hym selfe after a godly fashion, that knoweth nothynge of God, that is cōceaued and borne in synne (as we all are) and of nature the chylde of wrath and ẏ enemye of God? How shuld we fynd the ryght waye & continue therin, seynge that (as the prophet Esay sayeth) we cā do nothyng but go astray? Howe is it possible that we shulde defende our selues from ẏ dyuell (which is a prynce and lorde of this worlde, whose preſoners also we be euery one) seynge that with all oure power and myghte, we can not do so muche as to hynder a smale leafe to hurte vs, or a poore flee from greuynge vs? Why wyll we poore wretched people boast so muche of great comforte, helpe, and cōsell agaynste the iudgement of God, agaynst Gods wrath & euerlastynge death, seyng ẏ by our selues & otherwe haue experiēce dayly & hourely, how we cā nother cōsell, nor cōforte our selues ī smal bodely necessities.

A playne cōparison.

Therfore conclude thus hardely: As lytle as a natural shepe can helpe it selfe in

the thynges that be least of all, but muste loke for all benefites at his shepherdes hande, muchlesse can a man rule, comforte, helpe or geue counsell vnto hymselfe in thinges belongynge saluacyon, but muste loke for al such at the only hand of God his shepherde, wich to fulfyl ony thing for his shepe ẏ is to be done, is a thousande tymes more wyllynge and diligent, then ony other vertuous shepherde in the worlde.

As for this shepherde of whom ẏ prophete had spoken so longe before, it is euen Christ oure louynge master, which is farre an other maner of shepherde then Moses, which is harde and extreme vnto his shepe, and dryueth them backe in to the wyldernesse where they fynde nother pasture nor water but playne scarcenesse, Exo.iii. But Christ is the gracyous and louynge shepherde, which rūneth after the famished and lost shepe in the wyldernesse, and seketh it there: And whan he fyndeth it, he taketh it vp gladly vpon his shulders, Luce.xv. Yee and geueth his lyfe also for his shepe, Jo x. This must nedes be a louynge shepherde. Who wold e not be glad then to be a shepe of his.

Christ is our shepherde.

This shepherdes voyce wherwith he speaketh and calleth vnto his shepe, is the holy gospell, wherby we be taught that we optayne grace, remission of synnes & euerlastyng saluacyō, not by Moses law (wher thorow he putteth vs in the mor fear, dred e and dispayre, which were to fearful, to sore

The shepherdes voyce.

afrayed and dispayred to muche afore) but by Christ, whiche is the shepherde and bysshoppe of our soules. 1. Pet. ii whiche hath sought vs mysserable and lost shepe, and fetched vs out of ỹ wylderneſſe, that is to say, from the lawe, from synne, from death, frō the power of the deuell from euerlastynge dampnacyon: And in that he gaue his lyfe for vs, optayned he vs grace, remission of synnes, cōforte, helpe and strength agaynst the deuell and all mysfortune, pee and euerlastynge lyfe also. This is now vnto the shepe of Christe, a louynge swete voyce, which they are hartely glad to heare, which they knowe ryghte well, and ordre themselues therafter. As for a straunge voyce that soundeth otherwyse, they nother knowe it nor herken vnto it, but auoyde and flye awaye from it. &c. Joh. x.

The pasture.

The pasture wherwith Christe fedeth his shepe, is also the comfortable gospell, wherby the soules are fed and strengthed, kepte from erroure, comforted in all temptacyons and troubles, defended agaynst the craft and power of the deuell, and fynally delyuered out of all trouble. Neuertheleſſe for as muche as his shepe are not all a lyke stronge, but some yet lost, and scattred here and there abrode, wounded, sicke, ponge & feble, he doth not therfore cast them awaye but hath much more respecte vnto them, & careth more diligently for them, thē for the other, that haue no such nede. For as the prophete Ezechiel sayeth in ỹ. xxxiiii. Chap.

He seketh them that be lost, bryngeth together them that be scattred abrode, byndeth vp suche as be wounded, loketh to them ꝥ be sicke. And the weake lambes that be but yonge at the fyrst (sayeth Esaye) he taketh vp in to his armes, and beareth them, and suche as be with yonge ones, doth he dryue forth fayre and softly. All this doth our louynge mayster Christ by the office of preachynge and distributynge of the holy sacrament, as it is ofte and with many wordes taught in other places. For to set it forth here worde by worde as nede shulde requyre, it were to longe. The prophet also hymselfe wyll declare it afterwarde in the Psalme.

By this then may we easely perceaue, how shamefully we haue bene seduced vnder the papacy. For Christ was not so louyngly set forth vnto vs, as the dearly beloued prophetes, Apostles, and Christ hymselfe doth: but so fearfully was he described vnto vs, that we haue ben more afrayed of hym then of Moses, yee we thought Moses doctryne muche more lyghter, & to haue much more swetnesse in it, then ꝥ doctryne of Christ. And so we knewe nothynge els, but that Christ had ben a wrothfull iudge, whose displeasure we myght haue reconcyled wt our good workes & wt our holines, & whose pardō we myght haue optayned thorow ꝥ merites & intercessions of sayntes. This is not onely a shameful lesynge, and a miserable deceauyng of poore consciences,

We haue ben deceaued.

but also the hyghest blasphemy of the grace of God, a denyenge of the death, resurrecc yon and ascention of Christ. &c. and of all his vnoutspeakeable benefites, ski aunderynge and condemnynge of his holy gospell, a destroyenge of fayth, and (in steade therof) a settynge vp of vtter abhominacyons, lyes, and errours. &c.

Blyndnesse.

Yf this be not darknesse, then can not I tell what darknesse is. Yet coulde no mā in a maner perceaue it, but euery mā toke it for ỳ playne verite, & yet vnto this day wyl our papistes nedes take it for ỳ ryght way, and shed much innocent bloude for ỳ same. Go to then, yf we can kepe and gide our selues, yf we can preserue our selues from errour, yf we can optayne grace and remissiō of synnes, resyst the deuel & all misfortune, ouercome synne and death by our owne merites: Then must all the scripture be false, which testifieth of vs, how that of our selyes we ar but lost, scattred abode, woūded, weake and feble shepe. And so shulde we haue no nede of Christe to be shepherde, to seke vs, to bryngе vs together, to gyde vs, to bynde vs vp, to loke vnto vs, & to strengthe vs agaynste the deuell. And so hath he also geuen his lyfe for vs in vayne: For yf we can bryngе all this to passe & optayne it thorow our owne strength and goodnesse, then haue we no nede of Christes helpe.

Marke this well.

But here thou heaest the contrary: namely, that thou art but a lost shepe, & of thy selfe canst not come to the shepherd agayn,

but to go astraye onely that canst thou wel do. And yf Christ thy shepherd dyd not seke and ketch the agayne, thou must nedes be a praye vnto the wolfe But now he cōmeth, seketh, fyndeth, and bryngeth the vnto his folde, that is to saye, in to his Christen congregacyō, thorow the word and sacramēt, geueth his lyfe for the and holdeth the styll by the ryght hande, lest thou shuldest fall in to ony errour. There hearest thou nothyng of thyne owne strēgth, of thyne owne good workes and merites, except thou wylt call it strength, a good worke and merite to go astray, to be feble and lost. Christ worketh, deserueth and sheweth here his power only. It is he that seketh, beareth and gydeth the. He thorow his death deserueth lyfe for the. He onely is stronge, and defendeth the lest thou shuldest perysshe and be taken awaye out of his hādes. Joh.x. Unto al this canst thou do nothynge, saue applye thyne eares to heare, and with thankesgeuyng to receaue such an vnoutspeakeable treasure, and to learne to knowe well the voyce of thy shepherde, to folowe him, and to eschue the voyce of straungers.

Wherfore yf thou wylt be rychely prouyded for, both in body and soule, aboue al thynges take good hede then to the voyce of this shepherde, herken well what he sayeth vnto the, let hym fede the, rule the, gyde the, defende the, comforte the. &c. That is to saye, kepe the vnto his worde, be glad to heare it and to learne it, & so no doute thou

Takehede to thy shepherdes voyce.

shalt be well prouyded for, both in body and soule.

By this that hath ben spoke of hether to, I thynke it but easy to vnderstand these wordes: The LORDE is my shepherde. Yee and all the whole Psalme beside. They ar but few wordes: The LORDE is my shepherde, but a great weyghte and pith. The worlde maketh great boastynge and crakynge of honoure, power, ryches, fauour, of men. &c. But the prophete maketh his boast of none of these, for they be all vncertayne and transitory. He speaketh but few wordes and good: The LORDE is my shepherd. Thus speaketh a sure and constant fayth, which turneth her back vpon euery thynge that is temporall & transitory, how hye and precyous so euer it be, and turneth ỹ face and hart straycht vnto the LORDE, which is onely and altogether and doth it hymselfe alone. Euen He and els none whether he be kynge or Emperour (sayeth he) is my shepherde. Therfore goeth he forwarde in all quyetnesse and sayeth.

I shall lacke nothynge.

A generall sentence.

This doth he speake in generall of all the benefites bodely and goostly, that we receaue by the office of preachynge. As though he wolde saye: Yf the LORDE be my shepherde, then doutles I shall lacke nothynge. I shall haue abundaũce of meate drynke, clothynge, a lyuynge, defence, peace,

and all maner of necessaries what so euer seruyth for the sustentacyon of this lyfe
For I haue a ryche shepherde, which shall not suffre me to lacke. Neuertheles he doth speake moost specyally of the spiritual goodes and gyftes that the worde of God bringeth with it, and sayeth: For as much as ✠ LORDE hath take me amonge his flock, & prouydeth for me with his own pasture. that is: for as muche as he hath rychely geuen me his holy worde, he shall not suffre me to haue scarcenesse in ony thynge. He shall geue his bleyssinge vnto the worde, ✠ it maye haue strength & bringe forth frute in me. He shall lykewyse geue me his spyrete to stande by me and to cõforte me in al temptacyons and troubles, to make my harte also sure and certayne and that I doute not therin, but that I am one of my shepherdes deare shepe. And he my faythfull shepherde, which wyll deale gently with me, as with a poore weake shepe, and wyll strengthe my fayth, endewe me also with other spiritual gyftes, comforte me in all troubles, heare me whan I call vpon hym, defende me frõ the wolfe, that is from the deuell, so that he shall not be able to do me harme. And fynally delyuer me from all misfortune.
This meaneth he whan he sayeth:

I shall lacke nothynge.

Anobiectiõ

Thou wylt saye: Yee but wherby shal I perceaue that the LORDE is my shepherde? I can not perceaue that he dealeth so

louyngly with me, as the Psalme speaketh yee the contrary do I well perceaue. Dauid was an holy prophete, and a man dearly beloued vnto God, therfore coulde he eafely talke of the matter, and beleue well as he fayd. As for me, I shall not be able to do it after hym, for I am a poore synner.

In answer

I haue declared aboue, that a shepe hath this good cõdicio & proper vertue in it that it knoweth well the voyce of his shepherde, and ordreth it selfe rather after the eares then after the eyes. The same vertue doth Christ prayse also in his shepe, whan he sayeth Joh. x. My shepe know my voyce Now his voyce soũdeth after this maner: I am a good shepherde, and geue my lyfe for my shepe And I geue them euerlastyng lyfe, and they shall neuer perysshe, & no man shall plucke them out of my hande. Take good hede now vnto this voyce, and ordre thy selfe therafter. Yf thou so do, then be sure that thou art one of Christes shepe, & he thy shepherde, which knoweth the ryght wel, and can cal the by name. Now yf thou hast hym for thy shepherde, then shalt thou verely lacke nothyng, yee thou hast already that thou shuldest haue, euen euerlastynge lyfe. Item, thou shalt neuer perysh, nother shall ther be ony power so greate & myghtye, as to be able to pluck ỹ out of his hãd. Onely be thou sure of this. For doutles this shepherdes voyce shall neuer fayle the. What wylt thou more.

Leaue not

But yf thou letteſt this voyce go, &

ordrest thy selfe after the syght of the eyes and after the feleynge of that olde Adam, thē leesest thou the fayth and confidence, which thou as a shepe shuldest haue vnto hym as to thy shepherde. And so falleth ther vpon the now one ymaginacion, now another, so that thou canst not be in quiete, but disputest by thy selfe and sayest: Yf the LORD be my shepherde, why suffreth he then the worlde to plage me and persecute me so myserably contrarye to all my deseruynge? I syt amonge wolues, and am not sure of my lyfe the twinkelynge of an eye, but I se no shepherde that wyll defende me. Item, why geueth he the deuel licēce to do me so much harme, with feare and despayre? Besydes this, I fynde my selfe all vnapte, feble, vnpacient, and laden yet with many synnes: I fynde no certainte, but doutfulnesse, no consolacyon, but fearfulnesse and quakyng for the wrath of God. Whan begynneth he to declare in me, that he is my shepherde?

the voyce of thy shepherde.

Such and many other mo wonderful cogitacyōs shalt thou haue, yf thou let his voyce and worde passe. But yf thou cleue styll fast vnto it, then suffrest thou nother the deceatfulnesse of the deuell, the displeasure & madnesse of the worlde, nother thyn owen infirmite and vnworthynesse to ouercome the by temptacyon: but goest on boldly, and sayest: Whether the deuell, ỹ worlde or myne owne conscience do take parte agaynst me neuer so fearfully, yet wyll not I therfore take ouermuch thought. It muste

whatgood foloweth whan one cleueth fast to gods worde.

and shalbe thus, that who soeuer is a shepe of the LORDE, he can not remayne vntempted. Let it go with me as it maye, yee whether they seth me or rost me, yet is this my comforte, that my shepherde hath geue̅ his lyfe for me. Beside̅s this, he hath also a swete and louynge voyce, wherwith he cō-forteth and sayeth: I shall neuer perysh, no ther shall ther ony mā pluckе me out of his hande, but I shall haue euerlastynge lyfe. This promyse wyll he faythfully kepe & me, what so euer become vpon me. And though somtyme ther chaunce a synne or other impediment by the reason of myne in firmite, yet wyll he not therfore cast me a-waye, for he is a louynge shepherde, which loketh to the weak shepe, byndeth vp theyr woundes and healeth them. And to the in-tent that I shulde be the surer of this & not to doute theron, he hath lefte me here the holy Sacrament for a token that it is so in dede.

Euen thus hath the prophet done. He was not mery alwaye, nother couldе he at all houres synge: **The LORDE is my shepherd, I shal lacke nothyng**

He hath bene somtyme at many a great ex-igent, yee all to many: so that he nother felt the ryghteousnesse, comforte, nor helpe of of God, but playne synne, the wrath of God, fearfulnesse, dispayre, the paynes of hell. &c. as he complaynеth hymselfe in ma-ny Psalmes. Neuertheless he turneth him

from his owne felynge, and taketh holde of God by his promise concernynge Messias that then was for to come, and casteth this in in his mynde: How soeuer it stande with me, yet is this the cõforte of my hart, that I haue a gracyous & mercyful LORDE, which is my shepherde, whose worde and promise doth strength and cõforte me, therfore shall I lacke nothynge. And euen therfore hath he wrytten this and other Psalmes, to the intent that we shulde be sure, that in very temptacyons there is elswhere no counsel nor comforte to be foũd. And that this is the onely golden science, namely, to cleue vnto the worde and promyse of God, and to iudge after the same, and not after the felynge of the harte. And so (no doute) ther shall folowe helpe & comforte, and not fayle in ony thynge.

Now foloweth the seconde verse.

¶ He fedeth me in a grene pasture, and leadeth me to ỹ fresh water.

IN the fyrst verse hath the Prophet shortly cõprehended ỹ meanyng of ỹ whol psalme, namely ỹ who so euer hath ỹ Lorde for his shepherd, shal lack nothyng

More than this doth not he teache in thys Psalme, but onely setteth forth the same more at large with goodly ornate wordes & similitudes how it chaūceth ỹ they which are the lordis shepe, lack nothynge, & saieth

He fedeth me. &c.

But almoost throw out the whole Psalm (as his maner is oft tymes to do) he vseth wordes, which signifye somwhat els than they sounde. As whan he maketh mencyon of the shepherde, of the fedynge, of ỹ grene pasture, of the fresh water, the staf, the shep hoke. &c. it is easy to perceaue that he wyll haue somwhat els vnderstonde therby, thē we men vse to speake therof. Such maner of speakynge is very comune in the scrypture, and therfore shulde man take diligent hede thervnto, that they maye be accostumed wythall, and learne to vnderstonde it.

But se howe well fauouredlye he can speake. I am (sayeth he) a shepe of the lordes, which fedeth me in a grene pasture. &c. A naturall shepe can not be better, thē whā the shepherde fedeth it in a pleasaunt grene pasture, and besyde fresh water. Yf it can haue thys, it thynketh no man vpon earth is more ryche or happier then it. For there it fyndeth euery thynge that it can desyre. A goodly thick plentiful grasse, wherof it waxeth stronge and fat: A freshe water, wherwyth it can refreshe, and quycken it self. There hath it pleasure and ioye: Euen so wyll Dauid saye here lykewyse, ỹ God

neuer shewed hym a greater grace and benefyte vpon earth, then thys, that he might be in the place and among the people where the worde and dwellynge of God, and the ryght Gods seruyce was. For where that treasure is, there goeth it well both in the spirituall and worldlye regiment. As yf he wolde saye. All the nacyons and kyngdomes vpon earth are nothynge. They are (in dede) rycher, myghtyer, and more glorious then we Jewes, and make great boastynge therof. They boast also of theyr wysdome and holyneſſe, for they haue goddes also whome they serue: yet wyth all theyr pompe and glory, they are but euen a playn wylderneſſe and desert. For there is nother shepherde nor pasture, therfore muste the shepe nedes straye, be fampsh & perysh. As for vs, though we haue many wylderneſſes aboute vs, yet syt we here at rest, safe and mery in paradyse, and in a pleasaunt grene pasture, wher ther is plentye of grasse and fresh water, and haue with vs oure shepherde which fedeth vs, leadeth vs to the dryncke, defendeth vs. &c. Therfore can we lack notyhnge.

Thys man had goostly eyes, and therfore sawe he ryghtwell, what is the best & noblest good vpon earth. He maketh no boast of hys kyngdye worshyppe and power, he knowlegeth well that suche goodes are also the gyftes of God: nother renneth he from them and letteth thē lye: but vseth them vnto the honoure of god, and geueth

The chefest good vpō earthe is to haue gods word

hym thankes therfore. But of this maketh he specially hys boast, namely, that the LORDE is hys shepheroe, and he in hys pasture and kepynge. That is, that he hath Gods worde. This benefyte can he neuer forget, but speaketh therof maruaylous, excellently, and with greate ioye, and prayseth it farre aboue all the goodes vpon earth. And thys he doth in many Psalmes, as in the. 118. where he sayeth. The lawe of thy mouth is dearer vnto me, then thousandes of golde and syluer. Item I loue thy commaundementes aboue golde and precious stone. O howe swete are thy wordes vnto my tayste: Yee more then hony vnto my mouthe.

What we ought here to learne.

Thys science shulde we learne also, namely, to let the worlde boast of theyr great ryches, honoure, power, &c. For it is lowse, vncertayne and transytory ware, which God casteth in to the dongeon. It is a smal matter for hym to geue an vngracious persone (that blasphemeth and dyshonoureth hym agayne for hys rewarde) a kyngdom, a dukedome, or ony other worshyppe, and good vpon earth. These worldlye goodes are hys draff and swellynges, wherwith he fylleth the hogges belyes, that he is disposed to kyll But vnto hys chyldren (as Dauid speaketh here therof) he geueth ȳ ryght treasure. Therfore shulde we as the deare chyldren and heyres of God, nother boaste oure selues of oure wysdome, strength nor ryches, but of thys, that we haue the pre

cious pearle: euen ye worthy worde, where by we knowe God oure louynge father & Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Thys is oure treasure & inheritaunce, which is sure and euerlastinge, and better then al ye good of the worlde. Who so hath thys, let hym suffre other men to gather mony together, to lyue voluptuously, to be proude, and hye mynded. But though he hymselfe be despysed and poore in the sighte of the world, yet let not that tempte him, but let him thanke God for hys vnoutspeakable gyfte, & pray that he maye abyde thereby. It maketh no matter how ryche & glorious we be here vpō earth. Yf we kepe thys treasure, we haue plentye of ryches and honoure. S. Paull was a man of lytle reputacyon and poore vpon earth, hauyng the deuell & the world very fearce agaynst hym. But in the syghte of God he was a man ryght deare & greatly set by. Besydes thys he was so poore, ye he was fayne to get his lyuyng wyth the labour of hys handes. And yet for al ye greate pouertye he was rycher, then the emperour of Rome: hauinge neuertheless none other ryches, but the knowlege of Christ. For the which (sayeth he Phil.3.) I counte al thyngs (nothynge vpon earthe excepte,) very losse and donge.

The word of God is oure treasure.

The God of mercye graunt vs grace, ye we also after ye ensample of Dauid, Paul & other holy men, maye cōte oure treasure (which is euē the same ye they had) as great & magnifie it aboue al ye goodes vpō earth,

God hath done more for vs: the for many other.

and hartely to geue God thankes therfor that he hath voutsafed it vpon vs, afore many thousandes of other. He myght haue suffred vs to go astraye as well as ỹ Turkes, Egypcians, Jewes, and other ydolaters which knowe not of that treasure. Or els he myghte haue suffred vs styll to be harde harted, as are the Papystes, ỹ blaspheme and condemne thys treasure of oures. Where as he hath set vs now in hys owne grene medewe, and prouyded vs so rychely with good pasture and freshe water. It commeth euen of hys grace, therfore haue we the more to thanke hym for.

The medowe.

The grasse

As for the people of God or the holye congregacyon of Christ, the prophet calleth it a grene medowe. For it is Gods pleasaunt garden, garnysshed and bewtyfyed w all maner of spirituall gyftes. The pasture or grasse therin, is the worde of God, whereby the consciences are strengthed and refreshed. In the same grene medowe doth oure LORDE God gather hys shepe together, fedeth them therin with good grasse, and refresheth them with freshe water. That is, he committeth vnto the holy Christen church the shepherdes office, deliuereth and geueth her the holy gospell and the Sacramentes, to take charge and loke to hys shepe therewith, that they maye be rychely prouyded for, wyth doctrine: with comfort wyth strength and with defence agaynst al euel. &c. As for those that preach the law of Moses or the commaundementes of me

what they be that fede shepe in the wylder nesse.

shepherde which doth not only fede thē in a grene pasture & leadeth thē to ỹ freshe water, ỹ they may be fat, stronge, & refreshed both bodely & goostly: but also taketh suche care for thē, ỹ they be not weery of ỹ good pasture & fresh water, leauyng ỹ grene medowe, & departe agayne frō the ryght way into ỹ wyldernesse. This is the fyrst parte of this Psalme. Now teacheth he farther how that they whiche are the shepe of this shepherde, be compassed aboute with many ieopardyes and misfortunes. Neuertheless ỹ LORDE (sayeth he) not onely defendeth thē, but delyuereth them also out of al tēptacyons & troubles. For he is amōge thē. Now after what maner he is & them, he declareth lykewyse well fauouredly.

What the prophet teacheth in this verse.

Here thou seyst ỹ as soone as ỹ worde of God goeth forth, & as soone as ther be ony ỹ receaue it & abide by it, immediatly ỹ deuel & al his angels steppe forth & moue the worlde & al ỹ power therof agaynst it, to put it downe, & vtterly to destroye them ỹ haue it & knowlege it For loke what our LORD god speaketh or doth, it must be tried & go thorow ỹ fyre. This is very nedful for christen men to knowe, els myght they fayle & thynke thus in theyr myndes: How stōdeth this together: The prophet sayeth afore: The LORD is my shepherd, I shal lacke nothynge. And here he sayeth cōtrary namely, that he muste walke in the darke valley. And in the nexte verse folowynge he confesseth that he hath enemyes: Where

Persecucyon.

by he geueth sufficiently to vnderstande / he lacketh many, yee all thynges. For he that hath enemyes and lyeth in a darke valley, seyth no lyghte, that is to saye, he hath nother comforte nor hope, but is forsaken of euery man, and euery thynge is blacke & darke before his eyes, yee euē the fayre clear sonne. How is this true then that he shulde lacke nothynge?

We maye not ordre our selues after ỹ outwarde lyght.

Here must thou not ordre thy selfe after theyne owne eyes, & folowe natural reason, as doth the worlde, vnto whom it is vnpossyble to se this ryche and glorious comforte of christen men, that they shulde lacke nothynge. Yee certaynly they holde that the contrary is true, namely, that ther are no people vpon earth more poore, more mysserable, and more vnhappy then christen men: Yee with all theyr diligence & corage helpe they therto, that they maye be moost abhominably persecuted, banyshed, shamed and put to death. And in so doynge, they thynke they do Gods seruyce therin. It appeareth therfore outwardly as though christen men were but shepe dryuen awaye and forsaken of God, and geuen ouer already in to the wolues mouthes, and to be euen such as lacke nothynge but altogether.

The seruauntes of Māmon.

Agayne they that serue that great God Mammon or the belye, appeare in the worlde, to be those good shepe whiche (as the Psalme sayeth) lacke nothynge: beynge rychely prouyded for of God: comforted and preserued from all parell and myssortune.

For they haue theyr owne hartes desyre, honoure, good, ioye, pleasure, euery mans fauoure. &c. Nother nede they be afrayed to be persecuted or put to death for ỹ faythes sake. For as longe as they put not theyr trust in Christ the onely true shepherd, nor knowlege hym, whether they beleue on the deuell or his dãme, or do what so euer they wyl beside with couetousnesse. &c. they are taken not onely for well doers therin, but also for the lyuyng sayntes, which byde stil by the olde fayth, and wyll not be deceaued thorowe heresye, which is (as Dauid teacheth here) that the LORDE onely is the shepherde So abhominable and greuous mortall synne is it to beleue on this shepherde and to knowlege hym, that ther cam neuer suche a synne vpon earth. For euen the Popes holynes which els can dispense with all synnes and forgeue them, can not remytte this onely cryme

The pope wyll not forgeue hym, that putteth his whole trust in Christ.

Therfore (I saye) in this thynge do not thou folowe the worlde & thyne owne reason, whiche whyle they iudge after the outwarde appearaunce, become foolysh, & holde the prophete but for a lyar in that he sayeth: **I shall lacke nothynge.**

But (as I sayde afore) holde thou the faste vnto the worde & promysses of God, herken vnto thy shepherde, how and what he sayeth vnto the, and ordre thy selfe accordynge vnto hys voyce, not accordynge

to that which the eye seyth or the harte fe-
leth. And so haste thou the victory. Thus
doth the prophet: He cõfesseth that he wal-
keth in the valley of the shadowe of death.
That is that he is compassed aboute with
trouble, heuynesse, angushe necessite. &c. as
thou mayest se at moze large in hys storie
and other Psalmes. Item, that he hath ne-
de of comforte, wherby it is sufficiently de-
clared that he is in heuynesse. Item, that he
hath enemyes. And yet he sayeth: Though
my tentatyons were mo and greater, and
though I were in a worse case. Yee though
I were in deathes mouth alreadye, yet do
not I feare onye misfortune. Not that I
am able to helpe my selfe thorowe myne
owne prouysyon, trauayle, labour or suc-
coure. Nother do I trust to myne owne wi-
sedome, vertue, kynglye power and riches.
For in thys matter, the helpe, counsel, com-
forte & power of all men is farre to lytle.

How the Prophet behaueth hymselfe in tentacyon & trouble.

But thys is it that doth it, euen that
the LORDE is wyth me. As yf he wold
say: Certaynly of myne owne behalfe I am
feble, in heuynesse, vered, and campassed a-
boute wyth all maner of parell and misfor-
tune. My hart also and conscience is not
quyete, because of my synnes. I fele an hor-
rible fearfulnesse of death and hell, so that
I myght in maner dispayre. But though all
the worlde, yee and the gates of hell be set
agaynst me, yet wyll I therfore not be dys-
coraged. Yee I wyll not be afrayed for all
the mysfortune and payne that they are a-

ble to laye vpon me. For the LORDE is wyth me. The LORDE (I saye) whiche made heauen and earthe and al that therin is, vnto whom al creatures, Angels, deuels men, synne, death, &c. are subiecte. Summa he that hath all thynges in hys owne power, is my counselgeuer, my comforter, my defender and helper. Therfore am I afrayed of no mysfortune.

After thys maner doth Asaph speake also in the.lxxii. Psalme, where he comforteth the Christen agaynst that greate stombynge block, that the vngodlye haue such prosperyte vpon earth: And that the beloued sayntes of God on the other syde are euer plaged, &c. and sayeth. Yf I haue, but the o LORDE, I passe not vpon heauen nor earth. Though both body and soule shulde perysshe. Yet thou o God arte the comforte of my harte and my porcyon. Now after what maner the LORDE is wyth hym, he sheweth farther more, and sayeth. Asaph.

Thy staf and thy shepehoke do comforte me.

The LORD (sayeth he) is wyth me, but not bodelye, that I maye se or heare hym. Thys presence of the LORDE whereof I speake, is not comprehended wyth the fyue wyttes. Onely fayth seyth it. The same is sure, that the LORDE is nyer vnto vs, then we are to oure selues. Wher by: euen by the worde. Therfore sayeth he. Howe the LORD is present & many faithful men.

Thy staf and thy shepehoke cõ forte me. As yf he wolde saye: In al my troubles and necessities I fynde nothyng vpon earth, whereby I maye be helped to be at rest. Onely the worde of God is my staf and shephoke where bye I holde me, and stonde vp agayne. And sure I am lyke wyse by it, that the LORDE is with me and doth not onely strengthe and comforte me by the same worde in all troubles, and tentations, but also delyuereth me from al myne enemyes, spyte of the deuell, and the worlde. With these wordes:

Thy staf and thy shephoke do comforte me.

The similitude of ỳ shepherde.

commeth he agayne vnto the similitude of the shepherde and the shepe, and wyll saye thus much. Lyke as a bodely shepherde ruleth hys shepe with the staf or shephoke, & leadeth them to the pasture and to fresh water, where they fynd meate and drynke, and defendeth them wyth the shephoke agaynst all parel: Euen so doth the LORD that true shepherde, gyde and rule me with hys staf. That is to saye, with hys worde to the intent that in hys syght I shuld walke with a good beleke and a mery conscience, and know to beware of vntrue doctrine and false holynesse. Beſydes this, he defendeth me also agaynst all iopardy and myssfortune, bodely and goostly, and deliuereth me from all myne enemyes, & his staf, that

is to saye, wyth the same worde doth he strengthe and comforte me so richelye, that ther is no mysfortune so greate, whether it be bodelye or goostlye, but I am able to come out of it and to ouercome it.

this goeth spiritually to worke.

By thys thou seyste that the prophet speaketh here of no helpe, defence or comforte of man. Nother drayweth he out ony swearde. &c. It goeth here all secretely, and preuelye to worke, euen by the worde. So that no man can spye thys defence & comforte, but onely they that beleue. And here doth Dauid wryte a generall rule for all Christen men, which is well to be noted. Namelye that ther is none other meane, waye vpon earth for onye man to be delyuered oute of all tentations, saue onely to cast all hys burthen vpon God, and to hold hym faste by hys worde of grace, to cleue surelye vnto it, and in no wyse to suffre it be taken from hym. Who so doth thys, can be content, whether he be in prosperite or aduersyte, whether he lyue or dye. And finally he can endure, and must nedes prosper agaynst all deuels, the worlde and mysfortune. Thys me thynke is a greate prayse of that good worde of God, and a greater power is ascrybed here vnto it, then is the power of all angels and men. Thus doth. S. Paull prayse it also. Rom. 1. The Gospell (sayeth he) is the power of God, for the saluation of all them that beleue thercon.

And with thys doth the prophet touche

The office of preachig

the office of preachynge, for by the mouthly preachynge of the worde which goeth in at the eares, and that the harte taketh hold vpon thy fayth, and by ỹ holy sacramentes doth oure LORDE God bringe all this to passe in his christen congregacyon, namely, to the intent that the people maye haue fayth, be strengthed in beleke, & preserued in the true doctryne. Item, that they maye finally endure agaynst all temptacyons of the deuell and the worlde. For sence the begynnynge of the worlde hath God dealte thus with all his sayntes by his worde, & besyde the same hath he geuē thē outwarde tokens of grace. This I saye because that no man shuld take vpō hym without these meanes to medle with God, or to chose him selfe a peculyar waye vnto heauen, els shal he fall and breake his necke, as the pope & his hath done. And as the Anabaptistes & other sedicious spretes do yet this daye.

And with these wordes **Thy staffe and thy shephoke do cōfort me.** wyl the prophet shewe some specyal thyng. As yf he wolde saye: Moses is a shepherde lykewyse, & hath also a staffe & a shephoke: neuertheless he doth nothynge els but cōpell and punysh his shepe, and ouerladeth them with an vntollerable burthen, Act. 15. Esa. 9 Therfore is he a fearfull and a terrible shepherde, of whō the shepe are afrayed and flye from hym. Neuertheless ỹ LORDE with thy staffe and shephoke, compel-

they fede not the shepe in a grene pasture, but in the wylderneſſe (where they famyſh) and leade them to foule ſtynkynge waters, wherof they perysh and dye.

By this allegorye of the grene pasture, wyll the prophete declare the great abundaunce and ryches of the holy gospell and of the knowlege of Christ amōge the fayth full. For lyke as the grasse in a grene medowe standeth goodly thicke and full, and euer groweth more and more: Euē so haue the faythfull not onely Gods worde with all plēteousneſſe, but also the more they vse it and medle withall, the more it increaseth and groweth amonge them. Therfore setteth he the wordes maruaylous playnly. He sayeth not: he bryngeth me once or ofte into a grene pasture, but fedeth me styl therin, that I maye lye, take my rest, and dwell euen in the myddes of the grasse, and nede neuer to suffre hunger or ony scarceneſſe beſyde. For the worde that he here vseth, may be called lyenge or restynge, as a beast lyeth and resteth vpon his foure fete. After the same maner doth Salomon speake also in the.lxxi. Psalme, where he prophecyeth of the kyngdome of Christ and the gospell, & it shulde myghtely go thorowe and come in to all places, and sayeth: Ther shall be an heape of corne in the earth hye vpon ȳ hylles. &c. & shalbe grene in the cytie lyke grasse vpon the earth. That Dauid also in this Psalme speaketh lykewyse of the gospell, he declareth hymselfe afterwarde, wher he

The great ryches of suche as beleue.

sayeth: He quickeneth my soule. Item, Thy staffe and thy shepehoke do comforte me.

The fyrst frute of Gods worde.

This is now the fyrst frute of ẏ worde of God, that the christē are so instructe ther by, that they increace in faith & hope, learne to cōmytte all theyr doynges vnto God, & what so euer they haue nede of eyther in soule or body, to loke for it at his hande. &c.

The secōd frute of Gods worde.

And leadeth me toẏ fresh water

This is the second frute of gods worde It is vnto the faythfull not onely pasture and grasse, wherby they are fylled & streng thed in fayth. But it is also vnto them a goodly colde fresh water, where by they cake refreshynge and comforte. Therfore leaueth he not there where he sayde: He fedeth me in a grene pasture, but addeth this also vnto it: And leadeth me to the fresh water. As yf he wolde saye: In the great heate whan the sonne doth sore burne. Psal. c. xx. and I can haue no shadowe, then leadeth he me to the fresh water, geueth me drynke and refresheth me, that is, in all maner of troubles, anguishes and necessities, goostly and bodely, whan I knowe not els where to finde helpe or comforte, I holde me vnto the worde of grace. There onely and no where els do I fynde ẏ ryght cōsolacyon & refreshynge, & that plenteously. Now wher as he speaketh here of this cōforte & gar-

nyshed wordes, he talketh of it in another place with playne and manyfest wordes, & sayeth: Yf thy worde were not my comfort and delyte, I shulde perysh in my trouble. I wyll neuer forget thy worde, for in my trouble it is my consolacyon, yee thy worde quyckeneth me. Psal. 118.

Neuertheless he cõtinueth styll in the similitude of the shepherde and of ỹ shepe. And (no doute) it is comen in all the prophetes. For of the shepe and other cattell had ỹ Jewes theyr best lyuynge, and were comenly shepherdes, as was Dauid and the Patriarkes. Therfore is this similitude oftymes spoken of in the scripture. But Dauid speaketh of this matter after the nature of the contre. For the lande of promyse is an hote, dryr, sandye, & stony lãde, which hath many wylderneses & litle water. Therfore in the fyrst boke of Moses it was more thẽ once declared, how ỹ the heythen shepherdes stroue wt the shepherdes of the Patriarkes because of water. For ỹ which cause in the same contre they toke it for a specyal treasur, yf they myght haue water for theyr cattell (In our contrees we know not therof, for ther is water ynoughe euery where) Of this dyd Dauid se, and he reheareth it for a specyall benefyte, to be vnder the custodye of the LORDE, whiche shulde not onely fede hym in a grene pasture, but also in the heate, bryngynge hym to ỹ fresh water, &c. Why the scripture rehearseth so oft this similitude.

Shortly, his meanynge is to declare, ꝙ as lytle as a mā can come to the knowlege of God and the trueth & to the ryght fayth without the worde of God: So lytle can eyther ony comforte and peace of conscience be founde without the same. The worldly haue also theyr comforte and ioye, how be it ꝙ endureth but ꝙ twinkelynge of an eye. Whan trouble and anguysh cōmeth (and specyally the last houre) it goeth awaye. As Salomon sayeth: After laughter commeth sorowe, and after ioye commeth heuynesse. But as for them that drynke of this fresshe & lyuynge water, they may well suffre trouble and disease in the worlde, but they shall neuer lacke the true consolacyon. And specyally whan it commeth to the poynt. The leafe turneth ouer with them, which is as much to saye, as: After shorte weppynge cōmeth euerlastynge laughter, and after a lytle sorow commeth excellent ioye. ii. Cor. iiii. For they shall not wepe & mourne both here and there, but as Christe sayeth: Blessed are you that wepe here, for ye shall laugh. Luce. vi.

Without gods word cā no mās conscience be at rest.

Psa. 14.

He quyckeneth my soule, & bryngeth me forth in the waye of ryghteousnes for his names sake.

Here doth the prophet declare hymself of what maner of pasture and fresh water

Spiritual pasture & water.

he spake, namely, euen of the same ꝑ strengtheth and quyckeneth the soule. This can be nothynge els but Gods worde But for as muche as our LORDE God hath two maner of wordes, the lawe and the gospel, the prophet whan he sayeth: **He quickeneth my soule** geueth sufficiently to vnderstonde that he speaketh not here of ꝑ lawe but of the gospell. The lawe can not quicken the soule, for it is a worde that requyreth and commaundeth vs to loue God with all our hartes. &c. and our neyghbour as our selues. Who so doth not this, hym it condempneth, and speaketh this sentence ouer him: Cursed be euery man which doth not all that is written in the boke of ꝑ law Deut. 27. Gal. 3. Now is it certayne that no man vpon earth doth this: therfore commeth the lawe with his iudgemēt, fearyng and vexynge the consciences. And yf ther be no helpe, it goeth thorow, so that they must nedes fall in to dispayre, and be condempned for euer. Of this occasion doth S. Paul saye: By ꝑ lawe cōmeth but ꝑ knowlege of synne. Item the lawe causeth but wrath.

The lawe

Rom. 3.
Rom. 4.

As for the Gospel it is a blessed worde. It requyreth nonesuch of vs, but bryngeth vs tydynges of all good, namely, that God hath geuen vs poore synners his only sōne to be our shepherde, to seke agayne vs faynt shed and dispersed shepe, & to geue his lyfe for vs, that he myght so deliuer vs from synne, from euerlastynge death, and from

The gospell.

the power of ỹ deuel. This is ỹ grene grasse & the fresh water, where ỹ LORD quickeneth oure soules. And thus are we made lowse frō euel cōsciēces & heuy thoughtes. Of this shal we speake more in ỹ. iiii. verse

He bryngeth me forth in the waye of ryghteousnes.

Here (sayeth he) doth not the LORD my faythfull shepherd leaue, ỹ he fedeth me in a grene medowe, & leadeth me to ỹ fresh water, & so quickeneth my soule, but he bryngeth me forth also in the right waye, that I departe not asyde, go astraye, & so perysshe. That is, he holdeth mi fast to ỹ pure doctrine, that I be not deceaued by false spyrites, and that I fall not awaye by ony other temptacyon or offence. Item, that I maye know, how I ought to leade mynoutward conuersacyon & lyfe, & that I suffre not my selfe to be perswaded by the holynes and strayte lyfe of ypocrites. Item, what is the true doctrine, fayth & seruice of God. &c.

To be led in ỹ ryght way what it is.

This is now agayne, a goodly frute & vertue of ỹ worde of God, that they which cleue fast there vnto, do not onely receaue strength & comforte of soule therby, but are preserued also frō vntrue doctrine & false holynesse. Many mē optaine this treasure, but they can not kepe it. For as soone as a man is to bolde & presumptuous, and thynketh hymselfe sure of ỹ matter, it is done wt hym. Or euer he can loke aboute hym, he is deceaued. For the deuell also can pretende

An excellent vertue of Gods worde.

holynesse, & transformeth hymselfe in to an angell of lyght, as sayntPaul sayeth. And euen so lykewyse can his ministers shewe thēselues, as though they were ỹ preachers of ryghteousnesse, & come ī shepes clothyng amonge the flocke of Christ, but inwardly are they rauenynge wolues. Therfore is it good here to watch & praye (as the prophet doth in ỹ last verse) that our shepherd may kepe vs by this treasure which he hath geuen vs. They ỹ do not this, certaynly they shall lese it. And the ende of that man (as Christ sayeth) shal be worse then the begynnynge. For they shall afterwarde become ỹ moost poysened enemyes of Christes flock, and do more harme wt theyr false doctryne, then the tyrauntes with the swearde. This had sayntPaul well proued by the false Apostles, that made the Corinthians and Galathians to erre so soone, and afterwarde made diuision in all Asia. We se it out selues also this daye by the Anabaptistes and other false spyrites. Luce.xi.

For his names sake.

The name of God is the preachyng of God, wherby he is magnified and knowē to be gracyous, mercyful, longe sufferyng, true, faythfull. &c. which (notwithstaynge that we be ỹ chyldren of wrath, and gyltye of euerlastynge death) forgeueth vs all our synnes, and taketh vs for his owne chyldrē and inheritours. This is his name, this doth he cause to be proclamed by his word. The name of God.

Thus wyll he be knowen, magnified and honoured. And (accordynge vnto the fyrst commaundement) he wyl euen thus declare hym selfe towarde vs, as he hath caused it to be preached of hym. Lyke as he doth styl, strengtheth and quickeneth our soules spiritually, and kepeth vs that we fall not in to erroure, getteth vs lyuynge for our body and preserueth vs from all misfortune.

This honoure & he so is as we haue nowe sayd, is geuen hym onely of them that cleue fast vnto his worde, these beleue & confesse playnly, that all the gyftes & goodes which they haue goostly and bodely, they receaue them of God, euē of his mere grace & goodnesse. That is to saye: **For his names** sake, not for theyr owne workes and deseruynges. For this do they geue thankes vnto hym, and declare the same vnto other.

This honour can not be geuen vnto God, of ony presumptuous iusticiaries, as heretikes and false spretes, or enemyes & blasphemers of Gods worde, for they magnify not his name, but theyr owne.

And though I walke in the valley of the shadowe of death, yet fear I no euell, for thou art with me. Thy staffe & thy shep hoke do comforte me.

Hetherto hath the prophet declared, that they which haue & loue the worde of God, can lacke nothynge. For the LORDE is theyr

lest not thy shepe, nother makest thē afrayd nor ouerchargest them, but geuest them comforte.

Therfore speaketh he here of the office of preachynge the newe Testament, whereby tydynge is brought vnto the worlde, that Christ came vpon earthe to saue synners: and therby hath optayned them suche a saluacyon, that he hath geuen hys lyfe for them. All they that beleue thys shal not perysshe: but haue euerlastyng lyfe. Joh. iii.

The staf & ỹ shephoke

Thys is the staf and shephoke, wherby the soules take refreshynge, comforte and ioye. Wherfore in the spirituall shepfolde, that is to saye in the kyngdome of Christ, ther ought none other lawe to be preached: but the Gospell which the prophet with ornate wordes calleth the staf and shephoke of comforte, wherebye they be strengthed in fayth, refreshed in theyr hartes, & receaue consolacyon in all maner of troubles and euen at the poynt of death.

what they be thatlede Christes shepe in a grene medowe.

They that so preach, vse the spiritual shepherdes office a ryght, fede the shepe of Christ in a grene medowe, leade them to ỹ fresh water, refresh theyr soules, kepe them that they be not deceaued, & comforte them with the staf and shephoke of Christ. &ce. And where thou heareste suche one, be sure thou heareste Christ hymselfe. Suche men also oughte to be taken for true shepherdes that is to saye, for the mynysters of Christ and the stewardes of God. Nother oughte it to be regarded, that the worlde crieth out

vpon them, and calleth them heretikes and deceauers. Agayne, they ꝑ teach ony thynge els contrarye to the Gospell, caulynge mẽ to trust to theyr owne worckes, merites, & to theyr owne fayned holynesse, these no doute, though they boast neuer so much to be successours of the Apostles, & decke them selues with the name and tytle of the christen church, ye though they rayled vp dead men, yet are they wolues and murtherers: which spare not the flocke of Christ, scatter them abrode, torment them, and kyll thẽ not onely spiritually, but bodely also as mẽ maye se now before theyr eyes.

The names that the worde of God hath in this Psalme.

Lyke as the prophete here afore doth call Gods worde or the gospell, grasse, water, the ryght waye, a staffe and a shephoke, Euen so afterwarde in the fyfth verse he calleth it, a table preparad, an oyntment, & a full cuppe. And this similitude of the table, oyntmẽt and cuppe doth he take out of the olde testament from the Gods seruice of the Iewes, and sayeth euen in a maner the same that he had sayd afore, namely, ꝑ they which haue the worde of God, are rychely prouyded for in all poyntes, both concernynge the soule and body, saue onely ꝑ he speaketh it here with other fygures and allegories. Fyrst bryngeth he in the similitude of the table, where vpon the shewebreads laye contynually. Exod. xxv. xl. And then declareth he what the same dyd sygnifye, and sayeth.

Upon the.xxiii.Psalme.

¶ Thou prepareſt a table beſore me agaynſt myne enemyes Thou anoyntest myne heade with oyle, and fyllest my cuppe full.

Here doth he knowlege playnly, that he hath enemyes. But he sayeth he kepeth hym from them, and dryueth them backe, by this meanes, namely, because ỹ LORDE hath prepared a table before hym agaynſt those his enemyes. Is not this a wonderfull defender? I wolde haue thought he shulde haue prepared before hym a stronge wall, a myghtye bulwarke, depe dyches, armour and other harneſſe & weapens, where by he myght be sure from his enemyes, and discomfite them. And now commeth he and prepareth before hym a table, to eate and drynke on, and so to smyte his enemyes. There coulde I be content to fyght also, yt the enemyes myghte be ouercome without ony ieopardye, care, trauayle and labour And I to do nothynge els but to syt at a table, to eate and drynke and be mery.

With these wordes: Thou prepareſt a table before meagainſt myne enemyes,

The great power of Gods worde.

wil ẏ prophet declare, ẏ great excellēt, & wō derful power of ẏ worde of God. As yf he wolde say: Thou offrest me such kyndnesse (O L O R D E) and fedest me so well and rychely at thy table which thou hast prepa red for me, that is: Thou endewest me so plenteously with the exceadynge knowlege of thy good worde, so that thorowe ẏ same I haue not onely plenteous consolacyon in wardly in my harte, agaynst myne owne e- uell conscience, agaynst feare and drede of death, and ẏ wrath and iudgement of God: but outwardly also thorowe ẏ same worde I am become so valeaunt and so inuinci- ble a giaunt, ẏ all myne enemyes can bryng nothynge to passe agynst me. The more wroth, madde, and vnreasonable they are against me, the lesse I regarde it. Yee I am so much the more quyete in my selfe, glad & content. And that of none other occasyon, saue onely ẏ I haue thy worde. The same geueth me suche power and corage agaynst all myne enemyes. So that whan they rage fearsly and are moost madde of all, I am better content in my mynde, then yf I satte at a table where I myght haue all that my harte coulde desyre, meate, drynke, myrthe, pleasure, mynstrelsye. &c.

An hye cō- mendacyō of Gods worde.

There hearest thou agayne, how hygh- ly this holy Dauid magnifieth & prayseth the good worde of God. namely, how that by the same, they that beleue, ouercome and wynne the victory, agaynst the deuell, the worlde, the fleshe, synne, a mans owne con-

science, and agaynst death. For yf a man haue the worde, and take sure holde of it by fayth, then must all these enemyes (whiche els are inuincible) be fayne to geue backe, and to yelde them selues. And it is a maruaylous victory and power, yee and a very stoute boastynge of suche as beleue, ỹ they subdue and ouercome all these horrible (yee and in maner almyghtye) enemyes, not wt ragynge, not with bytynge, not with resystynge, not with strykyng agayne, not with takynge of vengeaunce, not with sekynge of counsell and helpe here and there: but wt eatynge, drynkynge, pleasure, sittynge, beynge mery, and takyng of rest. Which thynges (as it is sayde afore) come all to passe thorowe the worde. For to eate and drynke is called in the scripture, to beleue, to take sure holde on Gods worde, wherout ther foloweth, peace, ioye, comforte, strength. &c.

Natural reason can geue no iudgemēt in this wonderful victory of the faythfull, for here commeth the matter to passe cleane contrarye to the outwarde senses of man. The worlde doth alwaye persecute & slaye the Christen, as the moost hurtfull people vpon earth. Now whan naturall reason seyth this, it can not thynke otherwyse but that the christen lye vnder: and agayne, that theyr enemyes preuayle and haue the victory. Thus dyd the Jewes intreate Christe, the Apostles and the faythfull, and put thē euer to execucyon. Whan they had slayne them, or at the least banished thē, then cryed

The natu rall reason of man.

they. Now haue we ỹ victory: these felowes that haue hurte vs, shal now trouble vs nomore. Now shall we handle euery thyng as we wyll. But whan they thought themselues to haue bene surest of al, our LORDE God sent vpon them the Romaynes, which dealth so horriblye wyth them, that it is a terrible thynge to heare. Then after certayne hundreth yeares, as for the Romaynes (which thorow oute all the empyre of Rome had slayne manye thousande martyrs) God rewarded them afterward, and suffred the cyte of Rome in few yeares to be four tymes spoiled by ỹ Gothies and Vandalyes &, finally to be brent, destroyed, and the empyre to decaye. Who had now ỹ victory? The Jewes and Romaynes that shed the bloud of sayntes, lyke water? Or the poore Christen that suffred themselues to be ordred lyke slaughter shepe, and had none other harnesse and weapon but the good worde of God?

Howe it goeth with the multitude of thē that beleue in Christe.

Thus doth Dauid declare wyth these wordes, how it goeth wyth the holy Christen congregatiō. (For he speaketh not here of hys own person only) setteth her furth i hyr coloures, and descrybeth her well fauouredly. Namely, how that in the syghte of God she is euen as a pleasaunt grene medowe, which hath plentye of grasse and freshe water. That is to say, that she is the paradyse and pleasaūt garden of God, garnyshed wyth all hys gyftes, and hath hys vnoutspeakable treasure, the holy Sacramentes, and that good worde, wherewith

he instructeth, gydeth refresheth and cõforteth his flocke. But in ỹ syght of the worlde hath thys congregation a farre other appearaunce, cuẽ as though she were a blacke darke valleye, where a man can se nother pleasure nor ioye, but trouble, sorowe, and aduersyte. For the deuell wyth all his power setteth hym selfe agaynst it, for thys treasure sake. Inwardly plageth he the congregation of God wyth hys venymous fyrie dartes. Outwarlye treadeth he her downe by sectes and offences. Then kyndleth he also hys brande vpon her, euen the worlde, which mynystreth vnto her all sorowe and heuynesse of harte, & persecutynge, sklaundrynge, blasphemynge, condemnynge and murthurynge: In so muche that it were no wonder that deare flock Christ were vtterly destroyed in the twynckynge of an eye, by such greate sotyltye and myght, both of the deuell and of the worlde. For she cã not kepe her selfe from hyr enemyes, they are farre to stronge, to deceatfull and to myghtye for her. She is cuẽ as the prophet doth here describe her: An innocent, symple and wapenlesse lambe, whiche nother wyll nor can do ony mã harme, but is alway readye not onely to do good, but also to take euell for good. Howe happeneth it then that the congregation of Christ in such weaknesse, cã escape the craftinesse and tyranny of the deuell and the worlde? The LORDE is hyr shepherde therfore lacketh she nothynge. He fedeth and refreshseth her, goostlye and bodely, he kepeth her in ỹ ryght

Howe the flocke of Christ winneth.

waye, he geueth hyr also hys staf and shephoke in steade of a swearde, which she beareth not in the hād, but in the mouth. And not onely comforteth the sorowfull therwith, but dryueth awaye the deuell also and all hys Apostels, be they neuer so sotyll and spitefull. Besydes thys, the LORD E hath prepared for her also a table, and Easter lambe. Whan hyr enemyes are verye wrothfull, gnasshe theyr tethe together ouer her, are mad, vnreasonable, in a rage, and out of theyr wyttes, and take all theyr sotyltye power and myghte to helpe them, for to destroye her vtterlye. Then doth the beloued bryde of Christ set her downe at hyrlordes table, eateth the Easterlābe, drynketh of ẏ fresh water, is mery, & syngheth.

The LORDE is myshepherde, I shall lacke nothynge.

These are hyr weapēs & gōnes wherw she hath hetherto smittē & ouercome al hyr enemies, & after ẏ same maner shal she haue ẏ victorye styl vnto domes day. The more also that the deuell and the worlde doth hurt and vexe her, the better is it wyth her. For hyr edifyenge and increase stondeth in persecutyon, affliction and death. Out of thys occasyon dyd one of the olde fathers saye. The bloud of martyrs is a sede, wher one is caste, there ryse an hundreth vp agayne. Of thys wonderful victory synge certayne Psalmes, as the. 9. 10. &c.

A notable sayenge.

After thys same maner haue I also (thorow

the grace of God) behaued my selfe thys eyghtene yeare: I haue euer suffred myne enemies to be wroth, to threatē, to blaspheme & condemne me, to cast theyr heades styl agaynst me, to ymagin many euell wayes, & to vse diuerse vnthryftie poyntes. I haue suffred them to take wonderous greate thought howe they myght destroye me and myne (yee gods) doctrine. Moreouer I haue ben glad and merye (but more at one tyme thē at another) and not greatlye regarded theyr ragynge, & madnesse, but haue holdē me by the staf of cōforte, and had recourse vnto the lordes table. That is: I haue committed the cause vnto God, wherin he hath so led me, ỹ I haue optayned all my wyll & mynde. And in ỹ meane tyme haue I done lytle or nothinge, but spokē vnto hym a pater noster, or some lytle Psalme. This is al my harnesse wherwith I haue defēded me hytherto, not only agaynst myne enemyes, but also thorow the grace of god, brought so much to passe, that whan I loke behynd me & cal to remēbraunce how it hath stond in ỹ Papistrye, I do euē wōder ỹ ỹ mater is com so farre. I wold neuer haue thought ỹ the tenth parte shulde haue come to passe as it is now before oure eyes. He that hath begon it, shal bringe it wel to an ende: Yee though myne helles & worldes were set on an heap together agaynst it. Let euery christen man therfore learne thys science, namely, that he hold him by this staf & shephoke & resort vnto this table, whā heuinesse, or

The authour of this boke.

ony other misfortune is at hande. And so shall he (doutles) receaue strength & cõforte agaynste euery thyng that oppresseth hym.

The oyntment.

The second similitude is of ỹ oyntmẽt wherof ther is mẽcõ made ofttymes in the holy scripture. It was some precious oyle, as Balme, or els som other swete smelling water, & the vse was to anoynte ỹ kynges & prestes withal. Whan ỹ Iewes also held theyr solempne feastes & were disposed to be mery, they dyd anoynte or sprenkle them selues & such precious oyntmẽt, as Christ declared lykewise in the sixte of Mathew wher he sayeth: whã thou fastest, anoynte thyne heade, & wash thy face. &c. The vse thẽ of this oyntmẽt was had among those people, whẽ they were disposed to be mery & glad. Lyke as ỹ Magdalene also thought to make the LORDE mery, whan she poured vpon his heade the precious water of Nardus, for she saw that he was heuy.

The full cuppe.

The thyrde similitude is of the cuppe which they broughte in theyr Gods seruyce, whan they offered drinkofferynges, and were merye before the LORDE.

With these wordes thẽ: **Thou anoyntest myhead w oyle, and fillest my cuppe full**, wyll the prophet describe ỹ great rych cõforte, which they that are faithful haue by ỹ worde of God, so ỹ theyr cõsciences are quiete, glad & at rest in the myddes of al tentaciõs & troubles. Yee euẽ of death. As yf he wold saye: doutles ỹ

The rych comfort of Christẽme

LORDE maketh me a maruaylous man of warre, and harnesseth me wonderously agaynst myne enemyes. I thought he shuld haue put materiall harnesse vpō me, set an helmet vpō myne heade, geuē me a sweard in my hande, & haue warned me to be circūspecte, & to take diligent hede to my matter lest myne enemyes shulde ouertake me.

Now commeth he and setteth me downe at a table, and prepareth me a goodly banket, anoynteth myne heade with precious Balme. Or (after the maner of our contre) setteth a garlande vpon myne heade, as yf I shulde go to some pastyme or daūsynge, and not fyght with myne enemyes. And to ỹ intent ỹ ther shulde be no scarcenesse, he fylleth my cuppe full, ỹ I maye drynke, make good chere & be dronken. The table thē prepared is my harnesse, the precyous oyntmēt is my helmet, & the ful cuppe is my sweard. With these do I ouercome all myne enemyes. Is not this a marueilous prepayring to warre, & yet a more wonderfull victory? Thus wyll he saye: LORDE, thy gestes whiche syt at thy table, that is to saye, the faythfull shall not onely be stronge and valeaunt giauntes agaynst al theyr enemyes, but they shalbe mery also & dronken. For why? thou makest them good chere, as a tyche hoost vseth to do to his gestes: thou fedest them well, thou makest them lusty & glad, thou fyllest in to them so muche, that they must nedes be dronkē. This is al done by the worde of grace. For by the same doth

Spiritual dronkēnes

the LORDE oure shepherde fede and strength so the hartes of his faythfull, that they dare defye al theyr enemyes, and say to the prophete: I am not afrayed for thousandes of the people that cōpasse me roūde aboute. Psalme. iii. And here afore in the fourth verse: I fear no euel, for thou LORDE art with me. With this (yee euen thorow the same) worde, doth he geue them also the holy goost, whiche maketh them not onely to take good stomackes vnto them & to be of good corage, but so quyet also in them selues and mery, that for the same greate exceadynge ioye, they are euen dronken.

This must be spiritually vnderstande.

He speaketh here then of a spirituall strength, of a spirituall myrth, and of a spirituall dronkēnes, which is a godly strēgth Rom. i. A ioye (as sayntPaul calleth it) in the holy goost, Rom. xiiii. And a blessed drōkennes, whan people are not full of wyne (wherout foloweth inconuenience) but full of the holy goost. Ephe. v. This is the harnesse & ỳ weapens, wherwith our LORDE God prepareth his faythfull agaynst the deuell and the worlde, namely, in theyr mouth geueth he them his worde, and in theyr harte he geueth corage, that is to saye, the holy goost. With suche ordynaunce put they from them all feare, and with gladnesse buckle they with all theyr enemyes, smyte them and ouercome them with all theyr myght, wysedome and holynesse. Such souldyers were ỳ Apostles on whit-

londaye, whan they went vp to Jerusalem agaynste the commaundement of the Emperoure and the hye prestes (and ordred thē selues, as yf they had ben very goddes, and all the other but greshoppers) and went euen thorowe with al power and ioye, as yf they had ben dronken. In so muche ỳ some had them in derisiō therfore, & sayd: They were full of swete wyne. Neuertheless s. Peter declared out of the prophet Joell, ỳ they were not full of swete wyne, but full of the holy goost. And so he smote aboute hym with hys swearde, that is he opened his mouth, and preached the worde of God and felled downe thre thousande soules at once from the power of the deuell. Actu. ii.

This strength, ioye and blessed dronkennesse doth not onely shewe it selfe in the faythful whan they be in prosperite & haue peace, but also whan they suffre and dye. As whan the counsell at Jerusalem caused the Apostles to be beaten, they were glad of it, that they were worthy to suffre rebuke for the name of Christe. Actu. v. And in the v. to the Romaynes doth saynt Paule say: We reioyce also in troubles. &c. Afterward were ther many martyrs also, which with mery hartes and laughynge mouthes went vnto theyr death, as yf they had gone to some pastyme or daunce: Lyke as we reade of saynt Agnes, and saynt Agatha (whiche were virgins of. xiii. or. xiiii. yeare olde) and of other mo, which were of suche inwarde corage and confidence, that they dyd not

The stedfast & ioyfull hartes of them ỳ haue suffred death for ỳ word of God.

onely ouercome the deuell and the worlde by theyr death, but also made good chere euen then with theyr hartes, as though they had ben dronken of very ioye. And this greueth the deuel exceadyng sore, namely, whā men are at suche quyetnesse in them selues, that they despyse his great myght & gyle. In our tyme also haue ther be many which for the knowlege of Christe haue ben glad to suffre death. We se moreouer that ther be many, whiche with perfecte vnderstondynge and fayth dye vpon theyr beddes, & saye with Symeon: LORDE, now lettest thou thy seruant departe in peace. &c. that is to a ioye to beholde thē, of whom I haue sene many my selfe. And all this commeth because that (as the prophete sayeth) they be anoynted with the oyle, which the. xliiii. Psalme calleth the oyle of gladnesse. And because they haue dronke of the full cuppe which the LORDE hath fylled.

Obiection

Yee but thou wylt saye: I fele not my selfe yet so apte, that I coulde be content to dye. &c.

Answere.

That maketh no matter. Dauid also (as it is sayd afore) hath not bene sure of that science at all houres, but somtyme cōplayned that he was cast out of gods sight. Other holy men also haue not alwaye had an hartye confidence towarde God, and a perpetuall delyte and pacience in theyr troubles and temptacyons. Saynt Paul somtyme is so sure and certayne in hymself and maketh suche boast of Christe, that he careth not for the curse of ỹ law, for synne,

Note this well.

death, nor for the deuell. I lyue not now (sayeth he, Galla.ii.) but Christe lyueth in me. Item, I desyre to be lowsed and to be with Christ. Phil.i. Item. Who shall separate vs from the loue of God, whiche spared not his owne sonne, but hath geuē him for vs all? How shall he not with hym geue vs al thynges also? Shal trouble, anguish, persecucyon, swearde. &c. separate vs from hym? Ro.viii. There speaketh he of death, of the deuell and of all euell with suche a corage, as yf he were the strongest and greatest of all sayntes, vnto whom death were but a sporte. But incontinently in another place, he speaketh as thoughe he were the weakest and greatest synner vpon earth.i. Cor ii. I was with you (sayeth he) in weaknesse, in feare and in muche tremblynge. I am carnall, solde vnder synne, and takō presoner in the lawe of synne whiche is in my membres. O wretched man that I am, who shall delyuer me frō the body of this death? Roma.vii. And in the fyfth to the Galathians he teacheth that in the sayntes of God ther is a cōtinuall stryfe of ẏ fleshe agaynst the sprete. &c. Therfore oughtest thou not immediatly to dispayre, though thou felest thy selfe feble and faynt harted, but praye diligently that thou mayest endure by the worde, and increace in the fayth and knowlege of Christ. As the prophete doth here, and teacheth other men lykewyse so to do, and sayeth:

An exposicion.

¶ Oh let thy louyng kyndnes & mercy folow me al the dayes of my lyfe, that I maye dwel in the house of ỹ LORDE for euer.

For as muche as the deuell neuer ceasseth to plage the faythfull inwardly with feare, outwardly with deceatfulnesse of false teachers, and with the violence of tyrãntes: he prayeth here therfore at the ende earnestly, that God which hath geuen hym this treasure, wyl kepe hym fast by it also vnto the ende. And sayeth: O graceyous God shewe me such fauour, that thy louynge kyndnesse and mercy maye folowe me all the dayes of my lyfe. And immediatly he declareth what he calleth this louyng kyndnesse and mercy, namely, that he maye remayne in the house of the LORDE for euer. As yf he wolde saye: Thou haste begonne the matter, thou hast geuen me thy holy worde, and accepted me amonge them that are thy people, whiche do knowlege, prayse and geue thankes vnto the, graunt me therfore such grace from hence forth, ỹ I maye continue styll by the same worde, & neuer to be separated more from thy holy christen flocke. Thus doth he praye also in the .xxvi. Psalme. One thinge (sayeth he) haue I desyred of the LORDE whiche I wolde fayne haue: namely, ỹ I maye dwell in the house of ỹ LORDE al the dayes of

Why the prophet maketh this prayer.

my lyfe, to beholde the fayre bewty of the LORDE (that is to saye, the true seruice of God) and to vysite his temple.

The prophete then here by his ensample teacheth and exhorteth all suche as put theyr trust in god, that they be not carelesse proude or presūptuous in themselues, but to feare and geue themselues vnto prayer, that they lese not this treasure. And doutles this earnest exhortacyon shulde steare vs vp and make vs feruent vnto diligent prayer. For seynge that holy Dauid which was a prophet, so hyghly endewed with all maner of godly wysedome and knowlege, and with dyuerse great excellent gyftes of god. Seynge he (I saye) dyd praye so ofte and with such great earnest, that he myghte abyde by this treasure. Much more shal it be mete for vs (which are vtterly nothynge to be compared vnto hym, and lyue also nowe at the ende of the worlde, whan as Christe and the Apostles saye, it shalbe an horrible and perillous tyme.) It shalbe muche more conuenient (I saye) to watch and praye wt all earnest and diligence, that we may continue in the house of the LORDE all the dayes of oure lyfe, namely that we maye heare the worde of God, & receaue the manyfolde cōmodites and frutes that come of it, (as it is rehearsed afore) & continue in the same vnto the ende. Which graūte vs Christ, our onely shepherde and Sauioure.

A notable ensample.

We haue most nede to watch & praye.

AMEN.

¶ Imprynted in Southwark
by James Nycolson, for Jhon
Gough.
Cum priuilegio.